

## HB 5420 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CHEESE SHOP WINE AND BEER PERMIT

Jason Sobocinski  
Caseus Fromagerie Bistro  
93 Whitney Ave, New Haven CT 06510  
phone 203.624.3373203  
[www.caseusnewhaven.com](http://www.caseusnewhaven.com)

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram, Senator Witkos, Representative Carter and the General Law Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on HB 5420 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CHEESE SHOP WINE AND BEER PERMIT. I am the owner of Caseus Restaurant in New Haven, CT with my own small cheese shop connected to the restaurant. This bill is something that I am very strongly in support of.

After the passage of the most recent bill last Session that allows liquor stores the ability to retail cheese in Connecticut, I feel that this is the natural "next step" in order to keep things fair between the two industries. Before opening Caseus Fromagerie, five plus years ago, I worked in Cambridge, MA at a very reputable cheese and specialty shop called Formaggio Kitchen. We sold a small selection of wines and beers that paired with our cheeses. The combination was wonderful! When a patron would come in we would have pairings for each cheese from our simple but high quality list of artisan products. This enhanced the customers experience and helped us with margins that can be very slim on perishable and often very expensive cheeses.

By allowing Cheese Shops in Connecticut to retail wine and beer, even at a small level, we can compete with the large chain supermarket, and now liquor stores that dip into our specialty market with their ability to sell cheese and other food. This bill would bolster our industry certainly as well as create a healthy spirit of competition

Unfortunately I can not make the hearing this upcoming Tuesday, but I would like to give my full support to passing a bill that would allow shops like Caseus, the Darien Cheese Shop and other specialty cheese retailers the ability to sell limited wine and beer for retail to their customers. It seems only fair that if liquor stores in Connecticut now have the ability to enter into our industry that we be able to do the same. Please don't be misled by that statement. Sure it levels the playing field, but more so for me and many in my position, the ability to pair a simple terroir driven wine with the perfect cheese or introduce a local micro brew to accompany a runny local cow's milk cheese to a customer, that is my ultimate goal!

Thanks for your time and all that you're trying to do to help us out! Where there is great cheese, wine and beer is surely soon to follow!

I am available anytime to answer any questions on this bill or if you're ever interested in talking about cheese, food, libations and passing bills to get more of these wonderful products out to the great people of Connecticut.

Thank you for allowing me to express my thoughts on HB 5420.